

Intermediate Readings for Socialist Alternative Members

To read after the New Member Reading Packet

Updated June 2017

Part 1: Key CWI & Socialist Alternative Readings

- [France 1968: Month of Revolution - Lessons of the General Strike](#), Clare Doyle
This 80-page book gives a brilliant picture of a socialist revolution in an advanced capitalist country, outlining the key aspects that make up a socialist revolution. Doyle argues that the French working class had power in its hands, and that capitalism could have been abolished and a truly representative socialist government brought to power, answering the reformist arguments of the French Communist Party which derailed the revolution. Also an excellent account of the role of students, the decisive power of the working class, and the nature of the post-war economic upswing that followed World War II. (2nd edition 2015, 79 pages)
- [Che Guevara: Symbol of Struggle](#), Tony Saunois
A fascinating appraisal of the life and role of Che Guevara as a revolutionary. Provides an introduction to the Cuban revolution and summarizes the CWI's analysis of its gains but also limitations. Also deals with the role of Stalinism, the peasantry, the working class, and the strategy of "guerrillaism" in challenging capitalism. (2nd edition 2005, 81 pages)
- [2016 Socialist Alternative U.S. Perspectives Document: U.S. Capitalism Passing Through Profound Crisis and Upheaval](#)
One of the keys to Socialist Alternative's success has been its correct analysis of the deepening polarization in U.S. society, the discrediting of key capitalist institutions, the shift to the left in mass consciousness, and our ability to draw out likely perspectives for the short and medium term. This document, adopted by Socialist Alternative's 2016 National Convention, outlines the economic, social and political processes in the U.S. and the potential for building the workers movement in the next period. (2016, 35 pages)

Part 2: Black Liberation and Labor's Giant Step

- [The Life and Legacy of Malcolm X](#), Andrea Enisuoh
An excellent Marxist comparison of the development of the civil rights movement and the ideas of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and the Black Panthers. (1993, 18 pages)
- [Marxism and the Fight for Black Freedom: From the Civil War to Black Lives Matter](#), Socialist Alternative pamphlet
Marx famously declared "Labor in the white skin can never free itself as long as labor in the black skin is branded." We believe the fight for black freedom is a central part of the working class's struggle for liberation. This pamphlet includes historical material tracing the role of socialists in the black freedom movement from the time of Karl Marx until the Movement for Black Lives today. (2016, 76 pages)
- [Labor's Giant Step: The First Twenty Years of the CIO](#), Art Preis (Preface - Ch. 9)
Well written, exciting history of the mass labor struggles during the Great Depression, often led by socialists, that won decent living standards for many workers. The reading also demonstrates how Franklin D. Roosevelt represented the interests of the corporate elite, not the working class. (1961, 85 pages)

- [Teamster Rebellion](#), Farrell Dobbs
Recounts the 1934 strikes in Minneapolis, explaining the various strategies that the Trotskyists used to win. Their example paved the way for the mass industrial unions that transformed the labor movement. (1972, 212 pages)

Part 3: Revolutionary History

- [Russia: How the Bureaucracy Seized Power](#), George Collins
Clear concise explanation of how the Stalinist dictatorship that developed in Russia after the working class took power in 1917 was not an inevitable outgrowth of the ideas of Marxism. (1987, 60 pages)
- [History of Bolshevism: From the Beginnings of Russian Marxism to 1905](#), Alan Woods
We recommend this edition (linked above) printed by Labor Militant/CWI.
There have been many distorted histories of the Bolshevik Party either written from an anti-Bolshevik perspective or its Stalinist mirror image. While the author of this work, Alan Woods, left our organization over 25 years ago and is now the leader of a small group that is hostile to the CWI, this document (written before he left the CWI) discusses the evolution of Bolshevism as a living struggle to apply the methods of Marxism to the peculiarities of Russia. It draws out lessons of numerous ideological debates in the early Russian Marxist movement that are extremely relevant for building the socialist movement today. (2nd edition 1998, 77 pages)
- [History of American Trotskyism](#), James Cannon
Traces the efforts from 1919-1938 by U.S. communists to build a new kind of revolutionary party (3rd ed. 1995, 303 pgs)
- [Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Spain](#), Felix Morrow
The Spanish revolution in the 1930s - against fascism and for socialism - captured the attention of working people around the world. Very well written lessons about the mistakes of the Stalinists, anarchists, and Trotskyists. Explains how to fight fascism, the differences between a popular front and a united front, and Trotsky's Theory of Permanent Revolution. (2nd edition 1974, 336 pages)

Part 4: Building Socialist Alternative

- [How to Recruit to Socialist Alternative - A Guide for All Members](#)
(2014, 6 pages)
- [It's Your Paper: How the Socialist Newspaper is the Center of our Party](#)
This pamphlet explains the role of a newspaper in a revolutionary organization, ways to sell the paper effectively, the process of writing for our publications, and how we can make use of social media. (2016, 19 pages)
- [Organizing a Socialist Alternative Branch - A Guide for Branch Organizers & Branch Committees](#)
(2014, 33 pages)

Part 5: Marxist Theory

- [The Communist Manifesto](#), Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels ([with introduction by Leon Trotsky](#))
Marx and Engels' classic text explaining the Marxist conception of class struggle and revolutionary change (1848, 20 pgs)
- [Socialism: Utopian and Scientific](#), Friedrich Engels
Engels' classic text which remains one of the key summations of the basic ideas of socialism. Explains the historical, material, and ideological foundations which Marxism developed out of. Brilliant exposition of some of the essential component parts of Marxism - the rejection of utopian socialism in favor of scientific socialism, dialectical materialism, and historical materialism (1880)
- [The State and Revolution](#), V. I. Lenin
Lenin's classic pamphlet explains the need to dismantle the capitalist state rather than just reforming it. He explains the need for a transitional workers' state and how a repressive state would "wither away" once classes have withered away. (1917, 101 pages)
- [The Transitional Program](#), Leon Trotsky ([with important 2010 intro by Peter Taaffe](#))
Trotsky applies the method of Marxism to the historical tasks of the workers' movement. Although written in 1938, the "transitional method" of developing demands is very "modern" and relevant to the struggles of workers' movements today. (2010 edition, 50 pages)
- [Left-Wing Communism: An Infantile Disorder](#), V. I. Lenin
Lenin explains the tactics the Bolshevik Party used in its involvement in three revolutions in 12 years, and how they applied to the ultra-left young communist parties of Europe in 1920. (1920, 111 pages)
- [Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism](#), V. I. Lenin
This pamphlet explains the fundamental economic question, that of the economic essence of imperialism, without which it is impossible to understand modern war and politics. (1917, 155 pages)
- [Introduction to Dialectical Materialism - The Foundation of Revolutionary Theory](#), Shaun Arendse
Good accessible introduction to dialectical materialism and Marxist theory from the South African section of the Committee for a Workers' International (2015, 20 pages)

In addition, all members should read and discuss our unique publications and websites:
US: SocialistAlternative.org | CWI-International: SocialistWorld.net | Marxist Theory: Marxist.net